



Key Food Plot Considerations

Location

Position them close to bedding cover like native grass areas, willow or dogwood plantings, and undisturbed forested locations to enhance the likelihood that deer will visit these spots first after leaving their beds. Additionally, placing them at the edges of your property or next to designated sanctuary areas can encourage deer to visit before traveling to adjacent properties in search of high-quality forage.

Shape & Size

The more contour we can create in food plots, the safer deer will feel while using them. Various groups of does can enter and exit a linear (long and narrow) food plot without disturbing one another, allowing mature bucks to find suitable cover for bedding behind each doe group.

Species Selection

Incorporating food plots that offer forage unavailable elsewhere significantly enhances the wildlife presence on your property. You can plant food plots as either single species or "cocktail plots." Cocktail plots, along with perennial clover plots, blend several species into one food plot, maximizing their appeal to wildlife year-round. Not only do both cocktail plots and perennial clovers attract more wildlife than corn or beans, but they also yield considerably more forage than these traditional crops.

Soil Testing & Amendments

If you've heard it once, you've heard it a dozen times: Get a soil test before you plant your food plots. Nothing will improve the health of a food plot more than properly amended soil. A soil test will tell you exactly what your plants need to thrive as well as the pH level of your soil, a vital factor in the plant health equation.

Equipment

Serious food plots require serious equipment. If you're planning to develop and maintain your own plots, you will need, or at least have access to: Tractor or robust UTV/ATV, Rotary cutter, No-till drill, rotary tiller, or disc harrow, Cultipacker/drag, Spreader for lime, fertilizer, and possibly seed.

While roto-tillers and discs have their advantages, excessive use can lead to soil erosion and deplete essential nutrients needed for healthy vegetation. No-till food plots are not only a bit easier to establish, but they also enhance your soil's quality. By avoiding constant tilling and disruption, you foster a healthy topsoil layer, which promotes better germination and overall healthier plots. The next step will be to remove any existing vegetation.

Seeding Timing & Methods

Seed mixes containing various seed sizes are best planted using broadcasting methods. For optimal seed germination, seedbeds should be prepared on firm, level ground. If broadcasting, it's advisable to culti-pack or lightly drag the area to enhance seed-to-soil contact. Additionally, no-till drilling for seeds like soybeans or corn can be successful in any soil type, as there is no need to till the ground each season.